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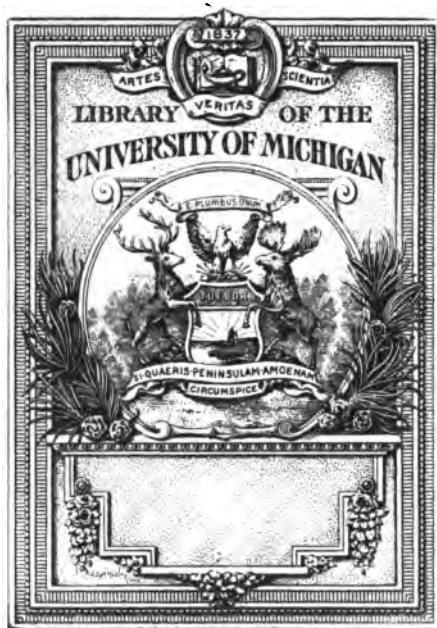
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HELPFUL HINTS FOR BUSINESS HELPERS

By Fra Elbertus

Elbert Hubbard

Written in a sincere and kindly desire to help the
your who do not know, and the
der ones who sometimes
forget



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By Elbert Hubbard

Helpful Hints for Business Helpers



GHARLES LAMB said that when he reached his office fifteen minutes late he always went away half an hour earlier so as to make the matter right. This was a joke. The chronic late is always marked on the time-book for a lay-off when times get "scarce." Your interests are the interests of the house, and theirs are yours—**BE ON TIME.**



As to the habit of getting everything packed and ready for a quick scoot when the bell rings, this does not mean for you a raise. Work as if you owned the place—and perhaps you may.



Young men who loiter around the entrance to the store or factory, and smoke, gossip, chew and spit, would do well to eliminate it. Be peculiar, and when you come to your work go to work, even if it be five minutes before time. This habit marks the difference between the youth who is going to be foreman and the others who have no luck.



If you are going to be absent, tell your foreman so and get his approval. If you are unavoidably detained from work, send word why.

All the knowledge and effort exerted in a business transaction may be overbalanced by an error in figures, an omitted word or by indistinct writing. Pull yourself together when these finishing touches are to be made, and, on your life, get them clear and correct.



Courteous manners in little things are an asset worth acquiring ✱ You rise when a customer approaches, you offer a chair, you step aside and let the Store's guest pass first into the elevator: these are little things, but they make your work and yourself finer.



To give visitors or to give short, sharp, flippant answers even to stupid or impudent people is a great mistake ✱ Meet rudeness with unfailing patience and politeness and see how much better you feel.



Your promise to a customer is your employer's promise. A broken promise always hurts; and it shows weakness in the character of a business organization, just as unreliability does in an individual.



Most inaccuracies come from not really listening to what is said, or not really seeing what you put down.

The chewing of gum, tobacco or paper as a jaw-exerciser should be eliminated. The world is now pronouncing them vulgar, unbusinesslike and dangerous. Keep ahead of your foreman and of the Board of Health in this thing.



Having promised to obtain goods or information, or to deliver goods by a certain time, do not start the thing going and trust to luck for the rest. Do your own part in full, and then follow up to know that the rest is moving on schedule time. Remember that the thing specially promised and of special importance needs most watching. "Accidents" and life's "various hindrances" get after just those things with a keen scent.



Accuracy in business is a virtue beyond esteem.



If your business is to wait on customers, be careful of your dress and appearance. Do your manicuring before you reach the store ✱ Dental floss is a good investment. A salesman with a bad breath is dear at any price. Let your dress be quiet, neat and not too fashionable. To have a prosperous appearance helps you inwardly and helps the business.



Graft, grand or petty, is moral, financial and spiritual skidoo for any man who indulges in it.

Keep your shop open. Losing time hurts your growth in your employer's business as it would in your own if your shop were open and closed, off and on. Avoid absence. Be "on the job" all the days and hours the business allows.



Give each customer your whole attention—and just as considerate attention to a little buyer as a big one.



As a salesman, know your stocks—what you have, and the facts of make, use, beauty and fashion which help and interest a customer. This will make you enthusiastic over your goods, and a good salesman without your knowing it. However, do not be too eager or unduly talkative.



Above all, in writing letters never show resentment or anger. The letter lives long after the cause of offense is forgotten. To write to a distant friend a give-away on the house—a grand call-down—is an error that is paid for every day in tears. The number of such letters posted in company envelopes that are misdirected and come back for the proprietor to read, is enormous. No one knows why these scandalous letters are usually directed to Chicago when the writer meant they should go to San Francisco. If you are going to defame your employer, never do it on his time or stationery.

Employees should be dignified in deportment, and not wrestle, hug, trip, jostle. These things all make an impression on customers, and a bad impression.



If customers are fault-finding—forget it.



Keep away from gambling-rooms, pool-rooms and all other places where you would not care for your employer to see you—or have you see him.



There are valuable positions always opening up in any progressive concern. Be ready to be promoted. Promotions go straight to the cheery, intelligent worker.



Don't throw waste paper and refuse on the floor—baskets are provided for rubbish. Be very careful never to leave oily waste in rubbish-baskets or on the floor—put such in metal cans and see that the cover is on. Spontaneous combustion is a common cause of fire.



If asked for information, be sure you have it before you give it. Do not assume that the location or fact is so now because you once knew it so. Don't misdirect. Make your directions so clear that they will be a real help.



Do not argue with customers, nor contradict them.

And for the same good reason, keep your personal callers, personal letters, personal matters, thoughts and states of mind away from the post of duty.



The man who endured everything from rude customers and got even by selling them a bill may not have been actuated by the best motives, but his general policy was right.



Never use the office telephone as a gossiping convenience. If your duties are to 'phone, say what is to be said quietly, intelligently and briefly. There are houses that are known by courteous telephoning. Loss of temper gains nothing. Telephone courtesy is a great thing, as courtesy always is.



Don't touch pencils, pens, erasers or papers on another man's desk, unless he is there. The Golden Rule applies well here, as elsewhere.



Responsibilities gravitate to the person who can shoulder them, and power flows to the man who knows how. Don't worry!



Always be circumspect and courteous. Bear the faults of some, the impoliteness of others, and pardon everybody sooner than yourself.



Try these: a kind thought, a kind word, a kind deed.

Never conceal unfinished work under blotters, in pigeonholes or drawers, depending on memory to find it. If necessary to leave unfinished work, it should be placed on the desk in sight, under a weight, so if you do not come back in the morning the other man will know just where things are and what to do.



The less you require looking after, the more able you are to stand alone and complete your tasks, the greater your reward. Then if you can not only do your work, but also intelligently and effectively direct the efforts of others, your reward is in exact ratio; and the more people you direct, and the higher the intelligence you can rightly lend, the more valuable is your life.



Never carry matches loose in your pockets—have a metal match-box.



The love you liberate in your work is the only love you keep.



The man with a debt he could not prevent, caused perhaps by sickness, should go frankly to his friend or his business chief. Shun the money-loan shark as you would contagion. Poverty, discouragement, temptation, too often crime, are the fruit of that sort of "confidential" financing.

U. S. P. M.

Do not gossip, either in or out of the Shop, about your employer's business, nor complain, if things do not suit you, to your fellow employees or the heads of other departments, but go directly to the head of your department and lay your troubles before him. He will adjust your grievances. This is one of the things he is paid to do.



The habit of borrowing small sums of money—anticipating pay-day—is a pernicious practise and breaks many a friendship. It is no kindness to loan money to a professional borrower.



Frequent meetings of department heads, and meetings of all the workers in any one department, are good things. They dissolve much social ice. You can't afford to cut them out.



The Savings-Bank Habit is not so bad as the Cab Habit—nor so costly to your thinkery and wallet as the Cigarette Habit. The man with the Savings-Bank Habit is the one who never gets laid off; he's the one who can get along without you, but you can not get along without him. The Savings-Bank Habit means sound sleep, good digestion, cool judgment and manly independence. ✱ The most healthful thing I know of is a Savings-Bank book—there are no microbes in it to steal away your peace of mind. It is a guarantee of good behavior.

NOT

Enthusiasm is a lubricant that makes the wheels of trade go round; a grouch is sand in the bearings. Enthusiasm, like factory melancholia, is catching.



Never use letter-paper or envelopes to figure on or for memoranda—it shows you do not realize that the first requisite in business is economy. The same rule applies to burning of lights that are not needed; whether there is a meter or a “flat rate” makes no difference—avoid waste.



If you work for a man, in heaven’s name work for him. ¶ If he pays wages that supply you your bread and butter, work for him, speak well of him, think well of him, stand by him, and stand by the institution he represents. I think if I worked for a man, I would work for him. I would not work for him a part of his time, but all of his time. I would give an undivided service or none. ¶ If put to the pinch, an ounce of loyalty is worth a pound of cleverness. ¶ If you must vilify, condemn and eternally disparage, why, resign your position, and when you are outside, damn to your heart’s content. But, I pray you, so long as you are a part of an institution, do not condemn it. Not that you will injure the institution—not that—but when you disparage the concern of which you are a part, you disparage yourself. ¶ And don’t forget—“I forgot” won’t do in business.

Thoughtless, unnecessary defacing of walls, damage of furniture and fixtures or posted signs and notices, and the reckless use of supplies, create waste in serious amount, and stray pretty close to that disregard of the other man's property-rights which the world reckons as dishonest.



Conversation about things not connected with the business should not be indulged in on "company time." The house can stand it, but you can't.



The most precious possession in life is good health. Eat moderately, breathe deeply, exercise out-of-doors and get eight hours' sleep.



Date all letters, memoranda and statistics—the Dating Habit is a good one.



Avoid cliques, and do not gossip nor listen to gossip about your fellow workers.



Do not try to make scale money after working hours at the Shop by working elsewhere. It is better for you that your leisure time be spent in profitable recreation. Get the fresh air.



Inform your friends that you do not care to have them call you during working hours. All your time belongs to your employer.

Learn from your mistakes, but don't cry over them.
We best redeem the past by forgetting it.



Do not disparage rivals, nor run down another
man's goods. If you do not know what to say, say
nothing.



Shed no tears over your lack of early advantages.
No really great man ever had any advantages that
he himself did not create.



Do not go over the head of your chief with either
inquiries, statements or complaints, unless called
upon to do so by some one in authority over him.



Mr. Buckner, Vice-President of the New York Life
Insurance Company, said to an employee who asked
for a raise in pay, "I would feel much more inclined
to double your salary if you lived on half that which
you now have. This is no business of mine, but I
express this to you as a friend."



When a mistake is pointed out to you, do not display
indifference, make excuses, nor try to lay the blame
on others if the fault is yours. Mistakes are shown
you simply as a guide to avoid the making of them
in the future.



To repeat unkind remarks is as bad as to invent lies.

If you dislike a fellow employee or are disliked by him, do not make a parade of the matter. Quarreling and backbiting are not compatible with good work, and if persisted in, will lead to the discovery of the blue envelope on your desk.



Do not stop work until the preparatory bell rings, then clean up your desk and be ready to leave it in perfect order when the last bell rings.



Your mistakes are blamed on your chief, and you must not complain if, after a time, he adopts drastic measures to relieve himself.



Superintendents and heads of departments must give their orders to the foreman of the department, not to workmen in that department.



If your salary does not suit you, do not blame your employer—blame your services; when they are worth more to him, he will pay you more.



The man who is worthy of being a leader of men will never complain of the stupidity of his helpers, of the ingratitude of mankind, nor of the inappreciation of the public. These things are all a part of the great game of life, and to meet them and not go down before them in discouragement and defeat is the final proof of power.

Get your Happiness out of your work or you will never know what real Happiness is.



Read the advertisements of your house, and without butting in, know what other departments are doing.



Do not join the Knockers' Klub; and avoid all fellowship with the folks who are trying to wear the face off the clock.



Criticize your foreman, not his helpers.



If you are laid off, spend your time in fitting yourself for better work. You would be with your employer as he faces the difficulties of Hard Times if you were what those are who are on his pay-roll now.



Do not refuse to do what you are told, nor do it grudgingly, simply because you do not understand the reason for it. If the one who tells you makes a mistake, he is the one who will suffer for it, not you.



Be absolutely honest with yourself and with the institution of which you are a part. Defend it, if need be, with a right swing.



When you come to your work in the morning or at noon, go directly to your desk and prepare for the day's work.

Do not talk during working hours except on business, and then only to the head of your division or to the head of the department.



If you are a foreman or a superintendent it behooves you to be doubly cautious of your speech and manner, for your subordinates are quite apt to quote and imitate you. If you do work on the outside don't expect that they will not.



The first item in the commonsense creed is Obedience. ¶ Do your work with a whole heart! Revolt is sometimes necessary, but the man who mixes revolt and obedience is doomed to disappoint himself and everybody with whom he has dealings. To flavor work with protest is to fail absolutely. ¶ When you revolt, why revolt—climb, get out, hike, defy—tell everybody and everything to go to limbo! That disposes of the case. You thus separate yourself entirely from those you have served—no one misunderstands you—you have declared yourself. ¶ But to pretend to obey, and yet carry in your heart the spirit of revolt, is to do half-hearted and slipshod work. ¶ If revolt and obedience are equal, your engine will stop on the center and you benefit nobody, not even yourself. ¶ The Spirit of Obedience is the controlling impulse of the receptive mind and the hospitable heart. ¶ There are boats that mind the helm and boats that don't. Those that don't, get

holes knocked in them sooner or later. To keep off the rocks obey the rudder. ¶ Obedience is not to obey slavishly this man nor that, but it is that cheerful mental condition which responds to the necessity of the case, and does the thing. ¶ Obedience to the institution—loyalty! The man who has not learned to obey has trouble ahead of him every step of the way—the world has it in for him because he has it in for the world. ¶ The man who does not know how to receive orders is not fit to issue them. But he who knows how to execute orders is preparing the way to give them, and better still—to have them obeyed.



A big business is a steamship bound for a port called Success. It takes a large force of men to operate this boat. Eternal vigilance is not only the price of liberty, but it is the price of every other good thing, including steamboating.

To keep this steamship moving, the Captain requires the assistance of hundreds of people who have a singleness of aim—one purpose—a desire to do the right thing and the best thing in order that the ship shall move steadily, surely and safely on her course. ¶ Curiously enough, there are men constantly falling overboard. These folks who fall overboard are always cautioned to keep away from dangerous places, still there are those who delight in taking risks. These individuals